

Message Text

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50

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ADP-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 OMB-01 GAC-01 ACDA-19 MC-02

RSR-01 INRE-00 /135 W
----- 065643

P R 301300 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4532

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E. O 11652 N/ A

TAGS: PINS/ EI

SUBJECT: PROVO ARMS- SMUGGLING VESSEL CAUGHT

1. ACCORDING TO MEDIA REPORTS, LARGE ARMY/ NAVY/ POLICE OPERATION NIGHT OF MARCH 28 CAUGHT VESSEL LOADED WITH ARMS FOR " PROVISIONAL" IRA. SIX IRISH MEN ALSO ARRESTED, SOME FROM SEIZED SHIP AND SOME FROM SMALL LAUNCH SENT FROM SHORE TO UNLOAD ARMS. ONE OF ARRESTED MEN IS JOE CAHILL, PROVO LEADER FROM BELFAST, WHO HAS BEEN RESIDING IN REPUBLIC. OTHER MEN ARRESTED APPARENTLY LOCAL RESIDENTS.

2. SHIP WAS NAMES " CLAUDIA," A 298- TON VESSEL REGISTERED IN CYPRUS BY " GIROMAR COMPANY" OF NICOSIA, BUT OWNED BY WEST GERMANS (PETER MULACK AND FRAU MARLINE LEINHAEUSER, WHOSE HUSBAND DIRECTS GIROMAR
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COMPANY). CAPTAIN WAS WEST GERMAN AND CREW WEST GERMAN AND TURKISH.

3. "CLAUDIA" WAS SEIZED OFF HELVICK HEAD, SOUTHWEST OF WATERFORD CITY. SHE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE COME FROM FAMAGUSTA AND TO HAVE STOPPED RECENTLY AT TUNIS AND CADIZ.

4. CLAUDIA REPORTEDLY CONTAINED FIVE TONS OF ARMS, INCLUDING ABOUT 250 RUSSIAN SELF-LOADING RIFLES, 240 CALIBER .38 REVOLVERS, SEVERAL THOUSAND ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION, 100 RUSSIAN ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES, 300 HAND GRENADES, 600 POUNDS TNT, AND FUSE WIRE. PORT WHERE LOADED NOT KNOWN. SOME CRATES MARKED "TRIPOLI".

5. AT PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 29, DEFENSE MINISTER PATRICK DONEGAN, FLANKED BY SENIOR ARMY AND NAVY OFFICERS, SOUNDED EXTREMELY PLEASED. HE CLAIMED THAT CLAUDIA HAD BEEN LURED INTO A TRAP AND PRAISED EFFICIENT OPERATION BY COMBINED SECURITY FORCES. DRAWING POLITICAL MORAL, HE SAID THAT 99 PERCENT OF IRISH CITIZENS WANT LAW AND ORDER, WHICH WILL BE PROVIDED BY THEIR GOVT AND LOYAL OPPOSITION. DONEGAN SAID THAT GOI HAD NO INTEREST IN CHARGING THE CAPTAIN AND CREW OF SEIZED VESSEL, WHO WERE ONLY INVOLVED FOR MONEY. HE ADDED THAT, AFTER INSPECTION, VESSEL WOULD BE GIVEN A KICK UP THE TRANSOM AND SENT ON ITS WAY."

6. ONE EVENING PAPER CLAIMS THAT BRITISH TIPPED OFF GOI RE VESSEL. SOURCE OF REPORT NOT STATED.

7. COMMENT: MUCH INFO IS STILL CONFUSED OR MISSING, AND WE DO NOT RELY ON DETAILS PUBLISHED IN PRESS. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THIS OPERATION WAS A BIG ONE BOTH FOR PROVOS AND IRISH SECURITY FORCES. HERE IN REPUBLIC, THERE HAS BEEN NO EQUALLY SPECTACULAR VICTORY AGAINST IRA FOR MANY YEARS. SOME OF EX-PM LYNCH'S ANTI-IRA MEASURES WERE MORE DIFFICULT POLITICALLY, BUT NONE HAD SAME NEWS IMPACT, WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF DECISION TO FACE DOWN SEAN MACSTIOFAIN'S HUNGER STRIKE. COMING AT THIS TIME, CLAUDIA OPERATION WILL PROVIDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MORALE BOOST FOR NEW GOVT. PM COSGRAVE UNDOUBTEDLY

WELCOMES OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW HIS OPPOSITION TO NI
VIOLENCE AND WILLINGNESS TO CRACK DOWN ON IRA.

8. WHEN RUSSIAN ROCKET- LAUNCHERS WERE RECENTLY
DISCOVERED IN NI, THERE WAS PRESS SPECULATION THAT THEY
HAD COME VIA LIBYA. QADHAFI' S EARLIER STATEMENTS WERE
ONE ELEMENT OF STORIES. SEIZURE OF CLAUDIA WILL
CERTAINLY STRENGTHEN IMPRESSION THAT RUSSIAN ARMS ARE
GETTING HERE FROM MIDDLE EAST.
MOORE

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